

Exploring the Role of Facebook in Re-Shaping Backpacker's Social Interactions

Edward Alexander Berger ^a
Cody Morris Paris ^b

^a Department of Communication and Cognition
University of Copenhagen, Denmark
edward.a.berger@gmail.com

^b School of Law
Middlesex University Dubai
c.paris@mdx.ac

Abstract

The recent Facebook launch of Timeline, Social Graph Search, and the increased use of the mobile Facebook apps has resulted in some important implications for the use of Facebook by backpackers. The purpose of this paper is to (re) explore how Facebook has impacted social relationships between backpackers and their personal, professional, and 'fellow traveller' networks, particularly in-light of these recent changes to Facebook and the increased reduction of anonymity while travelling. An exploratory survey was administered to 216 backpackers through social media. Descriptive analysis was conducted to explore the perceived social risks and benefits of Facebook in the context of the backpacking experience.

Keywords: Social Media, Independent Travel, Mobility, Social Networks, Social Capital

1 Introduction

The backpacker community has been an important segment of the tourism and hospitality industry, which has become increasingly mainstream (O'Reilly, 2006) and visible across the travel and tourism landscape. Many recent studies on backpackers have been focused on exploring the relationship of this segments of tourists and their adoption, use, and relationship with advances in information, communication, and mobile technologies (Paris, 2010; Paris, 2012; Germann Molz & Paris, in press). Several of these studies have noted that the adoption of technologies by backpackers have resulted in a 'virtualization of the backpacker culture' and allowed for the maintenance and sustainability of social relationships beyond the fleeting social interactions that occur while travelling.

In September 2011 Facebook radically re-designed the site, seeking to leverage the wealth of historical information it had gathered from users. The launch of 'Timeline', gave users complete and easy chronological access to a user's profile as it existed on a specific date (Facebook Inc., 2013). This historical access led to numerous issues as data that users thought was lost, deleted or inaccessible suddenly became readily viewable. For early adopters of Facebook, who had joined while at university, the sudden availability of this information was quite troublesome as many are now living quite different lives than they did in 2005. The second development, Facebook Open Graph Search, was launched in January 2013, and is a comprehensive natural language search algorithm. It draws upon the extensive information aggregated

through the Timeline feature, a user's Likes, and other activities on the site to generate advanced search results. It also allows for previously impossible searches such as, "Women from Sydney Australia named Jane studying at Copenhagen Business School" which filters by gender, city and country of origin, first name including variations, and current place of study (Facebook Inc., 2013). This makes finding and potentially adding acquaintances significantly easier. It also has major implications for privacy. From a backpacker perspective, this makes connecting with fellow travellers you have met while travelling much easier so long as you have several basic pieces of information. At the same time, however, it also makes staying anonymous even more challenging.

The increased use of mobile devices to access Facebook is another development particularly pertinent to the backpacker segment. It is now easier than ever, and becoming increasingly common practice, to be able to add a contact on the spot through mobile devices using cellular or Wi-Fi internet connections. A noteworthy departure from previous exchanges several years ago which still required individuals to have access to bulky and less well-connected devices such as laptops and desktops with internet connections in order to connect or research each other via Facebook. When considered in parallel to Facebook's new Open Graph Search functionality (Facebook Inc., 2013) it seems likely that we will continue to experience greater blurring of the boundaries between digital and face-to-face communication and interaction. In short, we are increasingly moving towards an environment where electronic communication is always present even in the case of backpackers who were previously partially defined by their reduced access to these technologies (Bowe, 2010; O'Regan, 2008; Steinfield et al., 2009). The purpose of this paper is to (re) explore how Facebook has impacted social relationships between backpackers and their personal, professional, and 'fellow traveller' networks, particularly in-light of recent changes to Facebook and the increased reduction of anonymity while travelling.

2 Literature Review

Since the 1990s our cultural definition of community has been radically re-crafted and expanded. This has been driven by the widespread adoption of electronic media and the internet. Tools such as instant messaging, discussion boards, mobile phones, and our dependency on email (Mascheroni, 2007; Tufekci, 2008; Urry, 2000) have broken down geo-spatial boundaries and greatly expanded our ability to maintain community over large distances and long periods. While these shifts and changes in mobilities have been important across all walks of life, they have been particularly significant for the backpacker community, which has been able to build upon these technologies to better maintain and virtualize their in-person social networks. These, in turn, have created non-geographically limited spaces in which sociality can occur through a blended combination of, "face-to-face interaction and mediated communication, co-presence, and virtual proximity, corporeal travel and virtual mobilities" (Mascheroni, 2007, pp 527). These shifts have brought with them changes in the way backpackers relate to information, manage their social identity, and view the strength of their relationships.

2.1 Theories Explaining Online Identity and Social Behaviour

To further explore the impact of Facebook on backpacker's social relationships and their behaviour, we draw upon the Proteus Effect, a theory proposed by Yee and Bailenson (2007) as an adaptation of, Reicher, Spears and Postmes' (1995) Social Identity Model of De-Individuation Effects or SIDE theory which can be used to analyze social boundaries and the formation of group norms in computer-mediated communication. The Proteus Effect differentiates itself from SIDE theory in part because unlike SIDE which focuses on group behaviours and norms, the Proteus Effect looks at the lasting effect of behaviour changes, including periods where the individual is no longer active within a group. This applies to a backpacker who continues to travel but is no longer physically co-present with peers or travellers met on the road.

The Proteus Effect is essentially an extension of Bem's self-perception theory (1972). The Proteus Effect expands upon the idea that internalization occurs when the subjects evaluate themselves from a third-person perspective. For backpackers this likely occurs while constructing their Facebook page and identity over time through the analysis and selection of interests, photos, videos and even custom friends lists. The Proteus Effect also expands upon individual identity as it may relate to expected vs. socially-enforced behaviour and instances where these can be complimentary or alternately divergent (Yee & Bailenson, 2007). This offers invaluable insight into how Facebook profiles, a digital avatar, can have a very significant real world behavioural impact and change a user's core identity.

Previous social-perception theory research highlighted the potential for changes in perception to translate into behavioural change (Yee et al., 2011; Valins, 1966; Johnson & Downing, 1979; Frank & Gilovich, 1988). More recently researchers have sought to re-produce these studies in an online context. Findings by Pena et al. (2009) and Yee et al. (2011) both suggest that these behaviours are not limited to face-to-face interactions, and cross over to online identity. This supports that perceived opportunities and threats to backpacker's social relationships through Facebook, a digital platform, will translate into non-digital behavioural modification and vice versa.

This paper focuses on Facebook as it is an extremely rich and multi-layered resource and could impact backpacker behaviour through changes in individual's front stage management (Goffman, 1959) behaviours. The advent and widespread availability of Facebook, e-mail, instant messaging, voice/video chat, international text messages, and the ease of movement is unparalleled (Mascheroni, 2007; Tufecki, 2008; Urry, 2000). As a truly global community, backpackers have seen the environment they socialize within change significantly. With these changes have come shifts in the amount of time and energy needed to maintain the new opportunities and threats to their social capital which stem from increased interconnectivity.

Before the advent of Facebook and social networking platforms, what existed was an embrace-the-moment philosophy among backpackers. Backpacking provided an opportunity to make rich friendships, but these friendships were the embodiment of

weak ties and assumed to be memorable but short-lived. In a sense, these interactions mirrored the places being explored. They were deeply enjoyed and lasted as long as the visit to a location, but then were often kept purely as a memory after the individual moved on to the next destination and group of acquaintances. While this discouraged maintenance of long-term friendships, it also encouraged a sense of anonymity and openness among backpackers. Understood through Goffman's (1959) conceptualization, this openness resulted in very different portrayals of individual's front stage selves, and an increased willingness to reveal elements of their back stage selves to semi-strangers. The sentiment often embodied a philosophy of, "*I'll never see or talk to these people again so what do I have to lose?*" A phrase still used within the backpacker community, but far less often as it is quickly becoming clear that the new answer is – "*Quite a bit.*" In the words of Bennett and Regan the days of anonymity are fading and movement is no longer, "a means of evading surveillance but has become the subject of surveillance" (2004, pp 453; Germann Molz, 2006).

2.2 Facebook and Backpacker Social Interactions

Social networking sites mark a significant shift in the nature of backpacker social interactions. With a few casual pieces of information about someone gathered in passing, it is possible to use powerful search features to identify their online profile (Facebook Inc., 2013). This has major ramifications for individual's anonymity. The previously insurmountable task of staying in touch and keeping information up-to-date is made simple using an internet connection and a series of clicks (Germann Molz, 2006). Once added to an individual's Facebook account, we opt into a constant co-sharing of life events, key data, and extended interaction which allow us to take a lax, or pro-active approach to outreach and engagement. In so doing, we also open up elements of our existing social network to others, as they in turn grant us access to a large cross section of their social community. These technologies are not just simple social tools, they have quickly become stand alone sites for sociality (Germann Molz, 2006, pp 377). This increased access provides a complex mixture of wonderful new opportunities – such as staying in touch with fellow travellers – and challenges – such as the collision between various social groups, conflicts between our various social identities, and a loss of anonymity. These can be understood through the lens of social facilitation, front stage management and the shifts that result within individual's ability to build and maintain social capital.

It should come as no surprise that users utilize Facebook predominantly to explore and follow their friends and friend's networks. The result of this surveillance leads to direct impacts on relationships and can either strengthen or weaken them depending on the information that is uncovered (Golder et al., 2006; Vitak, 2008). This information can range from issues with authenticity and behaviour to aspects of political and religious principles which would otherwise remain unknown and can have a significant impact on a person's social capital. In line with Goffman's concept of a front stage, and the concept of social facilitation, Facebook users have shown an acute awareness of this and as a result work to assemble, craft, and present socially desirable profiles that combine actions, images, and information that enhances their social capital (Zhao et al., 2008). In line with predictions made by the Proteus Effect studies such as that done by Vitak (2008) have already begun to identify how

Facebook is having a very real impact on face-to-face interactions and offline relationships. The survey noted that 13% of users surveyed admitted that Facebook had damaged their relationships, an illustration of loss of social capital, due to information shared on Facebook. Of those 13% more than half stated that Facebook has resulted in disagreements with friends and 18% with family members reflecting damage to both bridging and bonding forms of social capital (2008, pp 89).

As media have become richer, and Facebook a more pervasive and open network, this concept of surveillance has grown significantly. The technologies that enable such effective and flexible communication also provide complex opportunities for close and distant social relations to monitor our behaviour and interactions. In line with this, Mansson & Myers' (2011) review of literature noted that the majority of people's time on Facebook is centred on the maintenance of their existing network; not proactive networking with outside groups which embodies what is expected based upon existing social facilitation research. This reflects the backpacker practice of adding individuals who were first met in person, or referred to them through an existing member of their social network. Browsing profiles, photos, status updates, and keeping tabs on romantic interests were all primary aspects of user's regular activity. This type of surveillance has become so ingrained in our culture that verbiage such as 'facebooking' someone is a core part of our social vernacular (Vitak, 2008, pp 41).

2.3 Managing Social Interactions and Privacy

The rise in importance of Facebook's privacy settings has served as one way of attempting to control the mixture of different networks that collide through Facebook. These are the embodiment of Goffman's (1959) concept of front region control and managed social capital (Ellison et al., 2007). They provide users tools that simultaneously allow for the controlled distribution of messages/updates and data through custom, user-selected, privacy levels, or more sweeping privacy settings that limit an individual's visibility. While these privacy controls do allow for more precise network management, the more complex the attempt at control, the more likely it is to fail.

Facebook's own evolving nature is one such threat. Both Facebook's transition from a closed university-based system initially to a public, global, and open system and its roll-out of the Timeline feature (Facebook Inc., 2013) serve as prime illustrations of where changes to the system can open users up to significant social ramifications. The social nature of Facebook is also another complicating factor, as it is impossible to control absolutely the chaotic elements introduced by an individual's Facebook friends. These individuals may post data, images, or other content that unintentionally breaches whatever security steps have been taken, in turn revealing compromising information about an individual's activities, past, location, or involvements.

This raises the point that not only does Facebook provide us with the opportunity to stay in touch with weak ties embodied by the concept of bridging social capital, individuals we would otherwise likely lose contact with almost immediately, it also allows different individuals within our network the opportunity to discover and interact with each other. These social crossovers, when positive, provide significant

increases to our social capital while strengthening our network's opinion and connection to us. The nature of these interactions and their impact on our social capital can vary drastically from group to group. Travel activities that may build social capital with one group – say college peers – such as involvement in drinking culture, or data about sexual exploits may at the same time severely damage our social capital with others such as family members or existing romantic partners.

Despite this need for a more careful approach to our activities, the backpacker and hostel community have shown an eagerness to take advantage of these fantastic benefits. Not only does Facebook provide an opportunity to build maintained social capital with individuals that would otherwise be lost to the depths of geography and time, it allows for the construction of an attractive profile which helps to showcase the larger group identity with its inherent social capital, as well as that of the individual. This is done through the sharing of photos, stories, videos, and conversations accrued while travelling. It also opens up an entirely new level of access to media captured by other backpackers during shared experiences. Thus, the same individual that might inadvertently post an incriminating photo of a backpacker passed out in the hostel bathroom may alternately post photos of that individual reflecting in a museum, or bungee jumping over Victoria Falls. Despite these positives, there is the impending threat of crippling losses to social capital should aspects of the backpacker and hostel experience reach employers in inopportune or unintended ways. The highly social and experiential nature of backpacking can lead to the posting and discovery of unflattering activities. These may be depictions in the form of photos or other content of general drunken behaviour, cultural ineptitude or more extreme behaviours such as documented drug use or vandalism (Bellis et al., 2007; Cohen, 1973; Paris & Teye, 2010; Riley, 1988).

Recent statistics suggest that at least 35% of potential employers now do social media searches and that a third of those that do have found information which prevented the hiring of the candidate. The top two categories of content that blocked applicants were inappropriate photos/info and information tied to alcohol and drug use (PR Newswire, 2012). It should be noted, however, that here too employers also stated that they evaluated the profiles for positives which were documented and in many cases helped the employee's application. Other research that has investigated the impact of Facebook on an individual's relationships and social capital suggests a wealth of career-related pitfalls associated with Facebook content. These range from accidentally costing people their jobs, individuals being terminated, and severe disciplinary actions taken in response to content discovered on, and/or posted on Facebook. This data indicates that not only can Facebook data be an issue for potential employees, it can cause significant issues for existing ones as well (Wang et al., 2011). Given that backpacker demographic data suggests that many backpackers' trips are taken while on vacation or summer breaks, this highlights an area where activities on the road may pose long-term issues that carry forward after the trip ends should traveller's front stage management practices fall short or prove poorly thought out. Based on the review of literature this study has one main research question. How has Facebook, in light of recent changes, impacted the social interactions of backpackers?

3 Methods

Data was collected through an online survey administered through SurveyMonkey.com. The questionnaire was developed based on academic literature (e.g.: Germann Molz, 2006; Mascheroni, 2007; O'Regan, 2008; O'Reilly, 2006; Paris, 2013; Paris & Teye, 2010), the researchers' personal experience, a survey administered during a previous study by the authors (Berger & Paris, 2013), and was pre-tested prior to being administered. The questionnaire included a mixture of demographic questions and likert-type (1-5) scale question focused on the impacts of Facebook on backpacker identity, experience, and social interactions.

Surveys were distributed through convenience and online snowball sampling (Baltar & Brunet, 2012) procedures over a 10-day period in the spring of 2013. Due to the highly mobile and geographically diverse nature of the backpacker community, the mixture of convenience and snowball sampling was selected in order to provide the greatest level of access and exposure possible with limited resources (Sills & Song, 2002). Backpackers are a 'difficult to sample' group, and similar sampling methods have been used in previous backpacker studies (Paris, 2013). A link to the survey was posted with a brief introduction specifying that the survey was specifically targeted at backpackers who were on Facebook. In total the survey and a short message were posted to twelve Facebook 'backpacker' groups (Paris, 2013) which contained a total 28,277 members. The practice of "bumping" the posting back to the top of the group discussion threads was used to ensure maximum visibility. In addition to Facebook, the survey link was distributed through Twitter. This was done through the one of the researchers' accounts, which has 5,839 followers, most of which are tied to his involvement within the backpacker community as a travel writer. Through industry relationships both Hostelworld and Hostelbookers, the two largest backpacker hostel booking websites, both repeatedly sent out tweets with the survey link. The total reach of the three Twitter accounts was 50,748. Tweets also included the use of #hashtags to help access a wider audience. Overall response rate is difficult to determine as these figures are somewhat inflated as it is difficult to ascertain how many of the members occupied membership across multiple groups, or to know how many times the link was shared or re-shared by some respondents. A total of 212 useable surveys were collected. Based on the Facebook Group Members and Twitter followers, an imprecise response rate would be 0.2%. Data was analyzed using SPSS.

4 Results

The profile of respondents aligns with recent studies on backpackers. The survey revealed that the respondents were long-term Facebook users. Just over 36% joined between 2004 and 2006 while the network was still mostly closed and limited to university students. The largest number of signups occurred in 2007, shortly after it was opened to a wider public audience with 34.7% of individuals joining that year. Interestingly none of the respondents were new to Facebook, as none reported joining in 2012 or 2013. When prompted if travel played a role in people's decision to sign up for Facebook, 23% indicated it had at least some influence. Two-thirds of respondents reported using Facebook at least several times a week while on the road suggesting that these individuals are staying highly connected to their online networks, which

reflects the wider intersection between physical travel and communication technologies (Germann-Molz and Paris, in press).

Table 1. Sample Profile

Number (%)		Number (%)	
Age (years)		Gender	
18-22	20(9.3)	Male	64(30.2)
23-27	99(45.8)	Female	148(69.8)
28-32	52(24.1)		
33-37	20(7.9)	Education	
37+	25(11.6)	High School (up to year 12)	7(3.2)
		Some University	19(8.8)
		University (4 year)	111(51.4)
		Graduate (advanced degree)	78(36.1)

In addition to allowing backpackers to be co-present with their virtual networks, findings illustrate that they are using Facebook to (re)connect with other travellers while ‘on the road’. In addition to helping facilitate and sustain social interactions, the results also indicate that respondents agree that ‘Facebook has made travel less anonymous’ (Table 2). One fourth of respondents indicated that they felt more accountable for their actions while travelling because of their use of Facebook, however on average respondents did not agree. Additionally on average, respondents were not worried about other travellers sharing their personal activities on Facebook (Table 2). In the context of surveillance and understood through the potential costs associated with members of an individual's network constantly re-evaluating an individual based on their profile this is a valuable insight. Not only does Facebook appear to be a surveillance tool used for positive social capital building and maintenance, it also provides an enforcement platform where at least part of the community experienced increased need for better monitoring and control of their front stage personas. About ten percent of respondents reported that people they have met while travelling caused problems for existing relationships at least once. Despite existing data about the number of employers doing social media searches and the potentially detrimental impact it can have, less than two percent of respondents stated that things they had posted had harmed their career, and there was on average a strong disagreement with the statement that, “Experiences that I have posted on Facebook from my time backpacking have harmed my career” (Table 2).

This suggests that while the number of respondents who are aware of damage to their professional social capital occurring is quite low, that backpackers likely underestimate the threat their actions and the material posted to Facebook poses to their professional career prospects. In addition to being aware of the potential risks and surveilling behaviour of their social networks, the majority of respondents also

indicated that they have used Facebook to monitor a family member while they travelled. This surveilling gaze, a concept explored in depth in previous studies (Germann Molz, 2004; Germann Molz, 2006; Germann Molz & Paris, 2013), suggests that the awareness of the decreased anonymity of the travel experience has not necessarily translated into strategies for negotiating this intersection of social networks. Only 16% of respondents indicated that they created custom lists to keep travel friends separate from their main social network. Additionally, on average most disagreed with the statement that the knowledge their behaviour can be documented on Facebook has kept them from doing what they would normally do (Table 2). One strategy that was employed was the selective addition of fellow travellers on Facebook.

Table 2. Facebook Question Response Means

	Mean	Std.
Facebook has made travel less anonymous.	3.73	1.072
Facebook has made my hostel experience more social (photos, communication, events, etc.).	3.62	1.099
I worry about other travellers sharing my personal activities on Facebook.	2.27	0.975
I feel more accountable for my actions while travelling due to Facebook.	2.60	1.153
Facebook is essential for maintaining relationships with people I met while travelling.	4.17	0.927
I have travel contacts whom I met in hostels that I keep in touch with without the use of Facebook.	2.63	1.369
I regularly add other travellers on Facebook whom I just met.	2.86	1.204
I have maintained friendships made while travelling which would not have been possible to retain without Facebook.	4.15	1.015
I am more connected to my fellow travellers because of Facebook.	4.11	0.947
I have used Facebook to monitor a family member while they travelled.	3.47	1.325
I have created custom lists to keep my travel friends separate.	2.02	1.244
I have used Facebook to monitor a romantic partner while they travelled.	2.57	1.342
The knowledge that my behaviour can be documented on Facebook keeps me from doing things I would have otherwise done while travelling.	1.98	0.954
People I've met in hostels and kept in contact with through Facebook improve my professional network.	3.18	1.049
Experiences that I have posted on Facebook from my time hostel/backpacking have harmed my career.	1.58	0.773

The majority of respondents indicated that they ‘added’ new friends to Facebook within the first several days of meeting them (70.9%), with nearly half of these new connections being added within the first 12 hours of meeting someone. This suggests that the once fleeting and short-term relationships of backpackers on the road are temporally extended. However, respondents do not necessarily do this regularly (Table 2). This suggests that respondents employ the act of ‘rejecting’ new friend requests as a means of negotiating social distance from those that they do not want to continue relationships with (German-Molz & Paris, in press). The primary reasons for rejecting individuals appear to be based in lack of familiarity with the person (47.3%), and/or a general dislike for the person (63.7%). A limited number of individuals expressed concerns about damage to their social reputation, existing romantic

relationships, safety, or future career prospects as reasons for rejecting new friend requests.

In spite of the potential social risks, most of the respondents reported some sort of experience-sharing Facebook behaviour with those that they met while travelling. For example, over 50% of respondents indicated that they shared and accessed photos shared by fellow travellers. These behaviours allow for the reinforcement of social relationships initiated through short-term physical contact. The three most agreed upon statements in Table 2 suggest that Facebook is viewed as an essential tool for maintaining relationships and feeling more connected with fellow travellers, many of which would not have previously been sustained. The strengthening of these 'weak ties' through Facebook also impacts the ability to reconnect in person with fellow travellers. Somewhat surprisingly, more than 75% of respondents indicated they had used Facebook to meet up again at least once. These findings further support the notion that there has been both a virtualization of the backpacker culture and a hybridization of the 'road' and virtual backpacker culture (Paris, 2010). Beyond the personal social network, there was a high level of agreement by respondents that these relationships maintained through Facebook also benefit them professionally (Table 2). These findings can also be interpreted as reflecting an extension of the Proteus Effect, through which people's relationships are bridging the digital/non-digital divide.

5 Discussion and Conclusion

Facebook is playing an increasingly essential role in facilitating and maintaining travellers' social relationships. Despite some risk to backpacker's relationships with their personal networks and existing social infrastructure, the findings of this study suggest that the benefits of adding other travellers is seen as a positive opportunity to maintain lasting relationships that were difficult, if not impossible, without Facebook. These benefits were generally seen to outweigh the occasional awkward Facebook encounter, but also suggest that there is an increased need for individuals to carefully engage in front-stage management of their online identities. In addition to the potential benefits and risks to their personal relationships, the reduced anonymity of their travel experience due to Facebook has the potential to impact their current and future careers.

The review of literature suggested that Facebook's reduction in anonymity would have adverse effects on individual's more impulsive and spur of the moment social interactions, and that it would discourage them from doing things they might not otherwise do due to the awareness that they were being monitored by the rest of their network (Allport, 1924; Bordens & Horowitz, 2008). However, the findings suggest that even though there is an awareness of the potential risks, the self reported impact on behaviour was minimal. While a sizeable number of respondents showed an awareness of Facebook's risk to their privacy and current social relationships, only a small subset reported experiencing negative ramifications with only slightly more viewing it as a threat significant enough to cause behavioural change.

The literature also suggested that this reduction in anonymity and the resulting increased level of connectivity would be viewed as a net positive social benefit (Mascheroni, 2007; Germann Molz & Paris, in press). This increase was anticipated to greatly improve the maintenance and exchange of social capital between backpackers by strengthening their connections and extending their ties and ability to remain connected over large geographical distances and extended periods of time. The findings indicate that backpackers view Facebook as an extremely positive social enabler that allows them greater access to their network with the potential for significant opportunities for increased engagement through both synchronous and asynchronous social interactions. The findings also suggest that these opportunities to build and maintain social relationships also translate into high-value communication that leads to and facilitates, in a majority of cases, future in-person reunions.

The results of this study suggest that there is a drastically different backpacker landscape than existed a decade ago and one in which the virtualization and intersection of the virtual and physical backpacker experience has resulted in unparalleled interconnectivity between backpackers. This added interconnectivity greatly increases backpackers' social capital, but comes with some increases in the complexity of social interactions as backpackers are forced to pay increased attention to how they manage their front stage personas and craft their social identities.

References

- Allport, F. H. (1924). Response to Social Stimulation in the Group. In *Social Psychology*, Chapter 11. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 260 - 291.
- Baltar, F. & Brunet, I. (2012). Social Research 2.0: virtual snowball sampling method using Facebook. *Internet Research*, 22(1):57-74.
- Bellis, M., Hughes, K., Dillon, P., Copeland, K., & Gates, P. (2007). Effects of backpacking holidays in Australia on alcohol, tobacco and drug use of UK residents. *BMC Public Health*, 7: 1–10.
- Bem, D. (1972). Self-perception theory. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology*. 6. New York: Academic Press. 2-57.
- Bennett C., & Regan, P. (2004). Editorial: surveillance and mobilities. *Surveillance and Society*, 4: 449 - 455.
- Berger, E.A. & Paris, C. (2013). Exploring the impact of Facebook on backpackers' social experience in hostels. *e-Review of Tourism Research*, 10(5/6):4-18.
- Bordens, K., & Horowitz, I. (2008). *Social Psychology*. 3rd ed. Freeload. Print.
- Bowe, G. (2010). Reading romance: the impact Facebook rituals can have on a romantic relationship. *Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology*, 2: 61-77.
- Cohen, E. (1973). Nomads from affluence: Notes on the phenomenon of drifter tourism. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 14: 89–103.
- Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C. & Lampe, C. (2007). The Benefits of Facebook "Friends:" Social Capital and College Students' Use of Online Social Network Sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12: 1143–1168.
- Facebook Inc. (2013). Facebook. Web. July 16th, 2013. <http://facebook.com/facebook>
- Frank, M., and Gilovich, T. (1988). The dark side of self and social perception: Black uniforms and aggression in professional sports. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54: 74-85.
- Germann Molz, J. (2006). 'Watch us Wander': mobile surveillance and the surveillance of mobility. *Environment and Planning*, 38: 377 -393.

- Germann Molz, J. & Paris, C. (in press). Social Affordances of Flashpacking: Exploring the Mobility Nexus of Travel and Communication. *Mobilities*.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Golder, S., Wilkinson, D., & Huberman, B. (2006). Rhythms of social interaction: messaging within a massive online network. In C. Steinfield, B.T. Pentland, M. Ackerman, & Contractor (Eds.) *Communities and Technologies 2007: Proceedings of the third international conference on communities and technologies*. London: Springer. 41-66.
- Johnson, R., & Downing, L. (1979). Deindividuation and valence of cues: effects on prosocial and antisocial behaviour. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 37, 1532-1538.
- Mansson, D. & Myers, S. (2011). An initial examination of college students' expressions of affection through Facebook. *Southern Communication Journal*, 76(2): 155-168.
- Mascheroni, G. (2007) 'Global Nomads' Network and Mobile Sociality: Exploring New Media Uses on the Move. *Information, Communication and Society*, 10(4): 527-546.
- O'Regan, M. (2008). Hypermobility in Backpacker lifestyles: The emergence of the internet café. In P. Burns and M. Novelli (Eds.) *Tourism and mobilities: Local-global connections* (pp. 109-132). Wallingford, UK: CABI.
- O'Reilly, C. (2006). From drifter to gap year tourist: Mainstreaming backpacker travel. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 33(4), 998-1017.
- Paris, C. (2010) The Virtualization of Backpacker Culture: Virtual Moorings, Sustained Interactions, and Enhanced Mobilities. In Kevin Hannam and Anya Diekmann (eds.) *Backpacker Tourists: Experiences and Mobilities*. Channel View Publications: Clevedon. p 40-63.
- Paris, C. (2012). Flashpackers: An Emerging Sub-Culture? *Annals of Tourism Research*. 39 (2): 1094-1115.
- Paris, C. (2013). Surveying "difficult-to-sample" backpackers through Facebook? Employing a mixed-mode dual-frame procedure. *Anatolia: An International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 24(1):75-85.
- Paris, C., Teye, V. (2010) Understanding Backpacker Motivations: A Travel Career Approach. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 19: 1-16.
- Pena, J., Hancock, J. & Merola, N. (2009). The Priming Effects of Avatars in Virtual Settings. *Communication Research*, 33(6), 1-19.
- PR Newswire. (2012). Thirty-Seven Percent of Companies Use Social Networks to Research Potential Job Candidates, According to New CareerBuilder Survey [Press release]. Retrieved July 20 2013
- Riley, P.(1988). Culture of International Long-Term Budget Travelers. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 15: 313-328.
- Reicher, S., Spears, R. & Postmes, T. (1995). A social identity model of deindividuation phenomena. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 6(1): 161-198.
- Steinfeld, C., DiMicco, J., Ellison, N., & Lampe, C. (2009). Bowling Online: Social Networking and Social Capital within the Organization. Proceedings of the fourth international conference on Communities and technologies. ACM Press
- Tufekci, Z. (2008). Grooming, Gossip, Facebook and MySpace. *Information, Communication and Society*, 11(4): 544 – 564.
- Urry, J. (2000). *Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-First Century*. Routledge: London.
- Valins, S. (1966). Cognitive effects of false heart-rate feedback. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 4: 400-408.
- Vitak, J. M. (2008). Facebook 'Friends' How Online Identities Impact Offline Relationships. Thesis. Georgetown University, 2008. Print. 1-23, 45-57, 69-89.
- Wang, Y., Komanduri, S., Leon, P.G., Norcie, G., Acquisti, A., & Cranor, L.F. (2011). I regretted the minute I pressed share: A qualitative study of regrets on Facebook. In Symposium on Usable Privacy and Security (SOUPS), Pittsburgh, PA (July 20-22).
- Yee, N. & Bailenson, J.N. (2009). The difference between being and seeing: The relative contribution of self perception and priming to behavioural changes via digital self-representation. *Media Psychology*, 12(2): 195-209.

- Yee, N., Ducheneaut, N., Yao, M., & Nelson, L. (2011). Do men heal more when in drag? Conflicting identity cues between user and avatar. In *Proceedings of the 2011 annual conference on Human factors in computing systems* (pp. 773-776). New York, NY: ACM Press.
- Zhao, S., S. Grasmuck, & Martin, J. (2008). Identity Construction on Facebook: Digital Empowerment in Anchored Relationships. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 24(5): 1816-1836.